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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-14 SAJ-01 ISO-00 ACDA-19 AEC-11 NEA-10

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4919
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
DIA WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 16145

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PARM, MARR, FR, GW, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET FEARS OF A WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE
ARRANGEMENT

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VIENNA FOR USDEL MBFR

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GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

1. SUMMARY. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SOVIET FEARS OF A WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT -- A PROMINENT RECENT FEATURE OF THE SOVIET PRESS -- ARE GENUINE. IN OUR VIEW THEY ARE BASED ON TRADITIONAL APPREHENSIONS ABOUT A UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE, A NEWER APPREHENSION THAT SUCH A EUROPE WOULD BE ARMED WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS, A FEAR OF THE POWERFUL ROLE THE FRG MIGHT PLAY IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE, AND AN OVERALL DISTASTE AT HAVING TO COPE WITH A LESS RELIABLE AND LESS STABLE ADVERSARY THAN A U.S.-DOMINATED NATO. SOVIET OPPOSITION TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE CUTS ACROSS TWO OTHER IMPORTANT SOVIET POLICIES. IT HAS ALREADY CAUSED SOME RETHINKING OF THE SOVIET POLICY OF ENCOURAGING UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM EUROPE -- WHICH MAY MEAN SOME POSITIVE FALLOUT AT THE MBFR TALKS. AND IT IS CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR MOSCOW'S TRADITIONAL EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THE U.S. FROM ITS ALIES -- WHICH MAY BRING SOME MODERATION IN SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF THE CONDOMINIUM THEME AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE OIL WEAPON. SINCE SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT EUROPEAN DEFENSE CAN HAVE A USEFUL EFFECT ON UNCONSTRUCTIVE SOVIET POLICIES, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE U.S. DO NOTHING TO ALLAY THAT CONCERN. END SUMMARY.

2. AS WEST EUROPEAN INTEREST IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION HAS GROWN, SO HAS SOVIET CONCERN. WE BELIEVE THE CONCERN IS REAL AND IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL FACTORS:

A. MOSCOW HAS BEEN CONSISTENT IN ITS OPPOSITION TO A UNIFIED WESTERN EUROPE. IT IS LEARNING TO LIVE WITH THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF WE, BUT POLITICAL INTEGRATION MAKES IT NERVOUS AND MILITARY INTEGRATION TROUBLES IT EVEN MORE. THE MILITARY FEAR IS A LONGSTANDING ONE, GOING BACK (AS YURI ZHUKOV POINTED OUT IN PRAVDA DECEMBER 25) TO THE EDC DEBATE OF 1954 AND EVEN TO THE LOCARNO AGREEMENT OF 1925. MOREOVER, CHINESE ENCOURAGE-MENT OF WEST EUROPEAN DEFENSE CAPABILITIES PROBABLY CONFIDENTIAL

DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO SOVIET PEACE OF MIND.

B. ADDING SPECIAL POINT TO THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET FEAR OF A MILITARILY UNITED WE IS THE PROSPECT THAT TODAY SUCH A GROUPING COULD DISPOSE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. VIRTUALLY EVERY RECENT SOVIET COMMENTARY ON WE DEFENSE HAS RAISED THIS THREAT.

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C. THERE IS ALSO A STRONG SOVIET FEAR THAT CREATION OF A WE DEFENSE STRUCTURE WOULD INCREASE BOTH THE POWER AND THE NEGATIVE POTENTIAL OF WEST GERMANY. ASPECTS OF THIS OBSESSION INCLUDE THE SPECTRES OF AN FRG REASSERTING ITS POLITICAL DOMINANCE IN WE, SLIPPING THE NUCLEAR RESTRICTION VIA A DEFENSE UNION, TURNING AGAIN TO A SERIOUS POLICY OF REUNIFICATION, AND THREATENING THE EAST ONCE MORE.

D. FINALLY, THERE IS PROBABLY A SOVIET DISTASTE FOR THE UNCERTAINTIES OF HAVING TO DEAL WITH A RESURGENT WE. A STRICTLY EUROPEAN ADVERSARY WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE LESS POWERFUL THAN A U.S.-DOMINATED NOAT; BUT IT WOULD ALSO BE LESS STABLE AND LESS RELIABLE IN SOVIET EYES. MOREOVER, MOSCOW MAY BE PERSUADED BY THE ARGUMENT USED BY SOME PROPONENTS OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE FORCE: THAT IN A CRUNCH, THE U.S. WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO RISK NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION FOR THE SAKE OF EUROPE. AT LEAST THE SOVIETS HAVE COME TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A QUARTER-CENTURY OF NATO, AND THEY PREFER THE DEVIL THAT THEY KNOW.

3. SOVIET MEDIA TREATMENT OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE IDEAS HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY HOSTILE AND QUITE INDISCRIMINATE. NO IMPORTANT DISTINCTION IS MADE BETWEEN A EUROGROUP FOCUS OR A WEU FOCUS -- THEY'RE BOTH BAD, AS A NEWTIMES COMMENTARY (NO. 49) POINTED OUT. MOREOVER, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT MUCH OF THE CURRENT SOVIET IRRITATION WITH FRANCE HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE DEFENSE ISSUE, ALTHOUGH SOVIET COMMENTATORS STOP JUST SHORT OF SAYING SO. THE FIRST INDIRECT CRITICISM OF FRANCE IN THE CURRENT SERIES (LITERARY GAZETTE NOVEMER 28) WAS BASED ON DEFENSE, AND JOBERT'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE BEEN REPORTED FULLY AND ARCHLY. IN CONTRAST, THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT'S SINKING OF EDC IN 1954 AND DE GAULLE'S VIEWS ON EUROPEAN UNION ARE RECALLED FONDLY BY SOVIET COMMENTATORS.

4. DESPITE PRESS ATTENTION TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL SOVIET DEMARCHE TO WE COUNTRIES AS FAR AS WE KNOW. PERHAPS SOVIETS ARE WORRIED THAT A PROTEST WOULD POUR FUEL RATHER THAN WATER ON THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE COALS. PERHAPS THEY ARE HOPING THAT -- TO THE EXTENT THE IDEA HAS SPRUNG FROM THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS -- IT WILL DIE DOWN WITH THE CRISIS ITSELF. OR PERHAPS THEY ARE WAITING TO TAKE THE MATTER UP NEXT YEAR WHEN BRANDT, POMPIDOU, AND HEATH COME TO MOSCOW.

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5. SOVIET OPPOSITION TO A EUROPEAN DEFENSE ARRANGE-
MENT IS IN MANY RESPECTS INCONSISTENT WITH TWO
IMPORTANT AND TRADITIONAL SOVIET POLICIES -- TO GET
U.S. TROOPS OUT OF EUROPE AND TO DRIVE A WEDGE
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES. IN SOME
AREAS -- PARTICULARLY MBFR -- SOVIET POLICY SHOWS
SIGNS OF RECOGNIZING THE DILEMMA AND ADJUSTING
TO IT. IN OTHER AREAS, MOSCOW SEEMS TO BE ENGAGED
IN AN UNEASY JUGGLING OFINCOMPATIBILITIES AND HOPING
THAT NOTHING WILL FALL TO THE GROUND.

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AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 16145

6. AS FAR BACK AS BREZHNEV'S SPEECH IN TBILISI IN MAY 1971 -- WHEN HE HELPED SCUTTLE THE FIRST MANSFIELD RESOLUTION BY GIVING A POSITIVE SIGNAL ON MBFR -- THERE WERE SIGNS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE RETHINKING THEIR COLD WAR DOGMA THAT U.S. TROOPS SHOULD BE FORCED OUT OF EUROPE. WHILE THE SOVIETS GAVE THE IMPRESSION THEY WERE BEING DRAGGED RELUCTANTLY TOTHE NEGOTIATING TABLE AT CONFIDENTIAL

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VIENNA, THEY DID END UP THERE -- A FACT WHICH IN ITSELF HAS TAKEN SOME OF THE STEAM OUT OF CONGRESSIONAL EFFORTS TO LEGISLATE A RAPID AND UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP REDUCTION. THE SPECTRE OF A EUROPEAN DEFENSE GROUPING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A MAJOR FACTOR IN CONTRIBUTING TO THIS QUASI-REVISIONIST SOVIET BEHAVIOR. A WEEK AGO AN MFA OFFICIAL CONCEDED AS MUCH TO US -- HE SAID THAT THE U.S. AND THE USSR HAVE A SHARED INTEREST IN AVOIDINGPRECIPITATE, UNILATERAL U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM EUROPE: THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE SHOCK THIS WOULD CAUSE IN RELATIONS WITH WE, THE USSR BECAUSE OF THE IMPETUS IT WOULD GIVE THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE IDEA.

7. IF THIS SOVIET CONCERN IS AS REAL AS IT SEEMS TO BE, THEN MBFR OFFERS MOSCOW THE POSSIBILITY OF A U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL UNDER CONDITIONS THAT WOULD NOT GALVANIZE WE INTO A UNITED DEFENSE GROUPING. PERHAPS EQUALLY IMPORTANT, MBFR OFFERS THE SOVIETS THE HOPE OF WEST EUROPEAN (PARTICULARLY WEST GERMAN) REDUCTIONS, WHICH WOULD SET IN TRAIN A PROCESS THAT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR THOSEINTERESTED IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE TO REVERSE. THIS CONSIDERATION MAY WELL BE AT THE HEART OF SOVIET INSISTENCE THAT WE FORCES BE INCLUDED IN THE FIRST STAGE OF REDUCTIONS.

*

8. THE SOVIETS HAVE RARELY HESITATED AT THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ITS ALLIES. THE NIXON-BREZHNEV MEETINGS, FOSTERING FEARS OF A U.S.-SOVIET CONDOMINIUM OVER THE HEADS OF THE WESTERN EUROPEANS, GAVE THEM ONE SUCH OPPORTUNITY. THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, PARTICULARLY THE TENSIONS CULMINATING IN THE U.S. ALERT, GAVE THEM ANOTHER. THEY WERE QUICK TO EXPLOIT BOTH, IN THE FIRST CASE BY PUSHING THE CONDOMINIUM THEME (AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THEIR EMPHASIS ON THE NUCLEAR WAR PREVENTION AGREEMENT) AND IN THE SECOND BY EXPLOITING THE ARAB OIL WEAPON AND WE DOUBTS ABOUT U.S. RELIABILITY TO EMPHASIZE DIVERGENT

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U.S.-WE INTERESTS. NOW -- SINCE THE CURRENT INTEREST
IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE IS PARTLY THE RESULT OF U.S.-WE
DISSENSIONS THE SOVIETS MUST BE BEGINNING TO WONDER
ABOUT THE CONTINUING EFFICACY OF A POLICY OF DIVISION.
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IT WOULD BE EVEN MORE OF A PROBLEM FOR THEM IF U.S.-WE
DISSENSION LED CONGRESS, OUMFIQ6:GGUTM6R WUUPAPRME-586:70FAX, TO APPR
OVE A MANSFIELD-TYPE TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

9. THUS, THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE ISSUE ARGUES FOR A
MODERATING OF THE SOVIET POLICY OF DIVIDING THE
U.S. FROM ITS ALLIES. AS LONG AS THE SOVIETS REGARD
THE ISSUE AS A LIVE ONE, WE MAY SEE A SOVIET RELUCTANCE
TO PLAY THE CONDOMINIUM THEME WITH THEIR ACCUSTOMED
ABANDON, AS WELL AS A TENDENCY TO EASE UP ON
ENCOURAGING USE OF THE OIL WEAPON. (OVERALL SOVIET
INTEREST IN DETENTE WITH THE WEST SHOULD ALSO EXERT
A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON OIL.)

10. OLD POLICIES DIE HARD, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT
SOVIET FEARS OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE WILL SWEEP AWAY
MOSCOW'S ENCRUSTED POLICIES OF SEEKING A WITHDRAWAL
OF U.S. FORCES AND OF ENCOURAGING U.S.-WE
DISCORD. ITS APPROACH TOWARD EUROPEAN DEFENSE MAY
JOSTLE THOSE POLICIES INTO MORE MODERATE CHANNELS,
BUT IT IS UNLIKELY TO DISPLACE THEM. A LIKELIER
PROSPECT IS A SOVIET ATTEMPT TO STRADDLE POLICIES,
REGARDLESS OF INCONSISTENCIES OR CONTRADICTIONS --
TO SEEK A DETERIORATION IN U.S.-WE POLITICAL AND
MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS (LEADING TO EVENTUAL REMOVAL
OF THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE FROM EUROPE), BUT A
DETERIORATION FREE OF THE SHOCKS WHICH COULD CREATE A
EUROPEAN MILITARY UNION.

11. THE MODERATING EFFECTS THE EUROPEAN DEFENSE ISSUE
CAN HAVE ON SOVIET POLICY ARE CLEARLY IN THE U.S.
INTEREST, AND COULD EVEN HAVE A SPECIFIC PAYOFF AT
THE MBFR TALKS. IT IS THEREFORE IN OUR INTEREST THAT
THE SPECTRE OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE CONTINUE TO DANCE BEFORE
SOV*ET EYES. WHATEVER OUR REAL FEELINGS ABOUT THE
ISSUE, WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO LET THE SOVIETS
THINK THAT WE QUESTION EUROPEAN SERIOUSNESS ON IT.
PROBABLY THE BEST REACTION TO ANY SOVIET INQUIRIES OR
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ABOUT OUR VIEWS ON THE DEVELOP-
UNG EUROPEAN INTEREST IN A SEPARATE DEFENSE SYSTEM
WOULD BE TO INDICATE U.S. EQUANIMITY AT THE PROSPECT.
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CERTAINLY WE SHOULD AVOID GIVING ANY IMPRESSION OF A
SHARED U.S.-SOVIET INTEREST IN HEADING OFF SUCH A
DEVELOPMENT, THOUGH WE SHOULD NOT DISCOURAGE MOSCOW FROM
PURSUING MBFR TO THAT END.SOMMERLATTE

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 8 MOSCOW 16145 , AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION
TO FOLLOW.

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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Authority: hilburpw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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